It was a miserable day to bury a miserable person. Harsh words, true, but it *was* heavily overcast and it *had* been raining for 3 days straight. Thankfully, it wasn’t a graveside ceremony, so the small gathering was in the Chapel – all six of them. Well, seven, if you included the deceased. There were two funeral home staff at the entrance, hands clasped in front of them in a show of supposed reverence, the Chaplain, DC Ken Nowt, ‘Lefty’ Johnson - and an old geezer up the back wearing a grubby coat who looked like a vagrant seeking refuge from the deluge.

The Chaplain (who obviously never knew the deceased) was droning on as DC Nowt, bored already, played Sudoku on his phone. The only reason Nowt was there was to make up the numbers on the insistence of his Guv, DS Clueliss - oh, and the fact that the deceased had become that way by inconveniently stepping in front of a speeding Black Maria. A token mark of respect on the part of the constabulary? *Yeah, right. Fat lot of respect the thieving sod had shown the police and his victims during his life of petty crime* thought DC Nowt. He caught snatches of the Chaplain’s eulogy – ‘…gone to a better place… with loved ones… a life cut too short…’

It wasn’t long before he glanced up from his game to see the curtain had now hidden the coffin sporting the single bunch of cellophane-wrapped, reduced-to-clear, flowers he’d bought from the petrol station on the way here (he’d kept the receipt). *Right then, that’s me off*, he thought as he made his way out.

He joined Lefty under the portico and pulled his coat tighter, tossing up whether to risk a run to the car park or wait until the leaden sky stopped tossing it down. Lefty, his left arm ravaged by polio and hanging loosely by his side, used his right hand to deftly pull out a smoke from his coat pocket.

‘Hope you’re not going to spark up Lefty’ DC Nowt said, nodding towards the prominent*NO SMOKING* sign fixed to the fluted column.

Lefty paused, smoke halfway to his gob ‘Er, right, just savin’ it fer ron Mr Nowt, sir’ - quickly stashing it behind his right ear.

‘Been behaving yourself then Lefty?’ Nowt asked

‘As always Mr Nowt’ Lefty replied confidently through lying teeth.

Nowt stared out into the sheeting rain for a few minutes until a thought struck him.
‘You’ve known Reggie Wilks all your life Lefty.’ Nowt said, nodding back towards the Chapel. ‘I’ve always wondered how the toerag got *Sliding Door* for a nickname’

Just then, Lefty suffered a nasty paroxysm of coughing, bent double trying to clear his lungs. Nowt slapped him a few times on the back and instantly regretted doing so – now he’d have to find somewhere to wash his hand.

When recovered, Lefty wheezed ‘Well it were like this Mr Nowt sir. When we was all at school Reggie was a bit, shall we say, different to all us other lads’

‘Different? How so?’

‘Well, we was all circumspect – but young Reggie wasn’t’ Lefty explained.

‘Circumspect? How do you mean, circumspect?’

‘You know – circumspect – not had the snip downstairs when he were a baby, like.’

‘Don’t you mean circumcised, Lefty?’ DC Nowt replied after some thought.

‘Yeah, that’s it!’ Lefty confirmed.

‘Mmm, I still don’t see where the name Sliding Door comes in’ Nowt replied.

‘Well it’s obvious innit…’ Lefty replied,

‘… a sliding door’s knobless. Give us a lift back to town then Guv?’